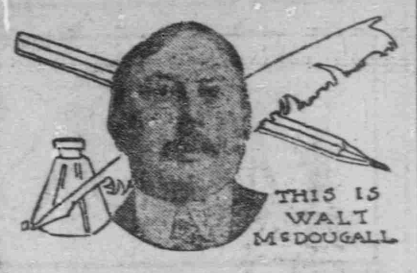




## WALT McDOUGALL'S GOOD STORIES FOR CHILDREN.



# Wallace Eastman's Strange Experience Under Water

**The Only Boy Who Ever Saw a Real Live Mermaid and How He Came to Have the Experience.**

**W**ALLACE EASTMAN is the only boy who ever saw a real live mermaid. He lived at San Jacopo, in South America, on the seashore, with his father, who was a cripple and could not work. They were very poor, and Wallace found it difficult to obtain food sometimes, but fish were plentiful and so was fruit, so they never really starved. Wallace, however, never knew what pie, cake, ice cream or pickles tasted like, for he never had money enough to buy such dainties.

One night there was a terrific earthquake in San Jacopo. Earthquakes were very frequent, and people rarely made much fuss over them, but simply counted the broken dishes, remarking sometimes that the seasons must be changing, because they never had and of the old-time earthquakes nowadays. The morning after this particular shock Wallace went fishing, but when he reached the shore he found that the sea had receded for a great distance, leaving a large pool of water surrounded by high rocks, and out in the middle of the pool he saw a man with a long beard, who dashed hither and thither as Wallace approached. The boy thought him crazy, he seemed so excited, but when he drew near he saw that it was a merman, for the lower half of his body was covered with scales.

### Penned Up By an Earthquake.

"Why are you so alarmed?" called Wallace. The merman stopped. He looked at Wallace, saw that he was but a boy, and seemed to take heart. "Nobody will harm you," added Wallace. "What's the matter?"

"I am penned in here by these rocks and can't get out into deep water," answered the merman. "The earthquake came suddenly and caught me here near shore."

"That's easily remedied," said Wallace, smiling. "I've a little cart and I'll haul you down to the shore if you wish."

The merman said that was what he most desired, and Wallace hurried away for his fish cart, with which he soon returned. The merman climbed in very cautiously, stowed his long tail away carefully and held on with both hands while the boy hauled him to the beach, a half mile away. Then, when the merman was in the sea, he became cheerful and said:

"I cannot thank you enough, but I'll reward you, my dear lad. I am the King of the Mermen, and you shall have any of the treasures of the sea you desire."

"I have heard that there is vast wealth in the ocean," said Wallace, "and indeed we are very poor."

### A Sunken Spanish Galleon.

"You are now richer than man ever dreamed!" said the Mer-King. "I shall bring you this evening a bagful of pearls that a Queen would lose her senses to look at. Why, right off here in twenty feet of water lies an ancient Spanish galleon that was sunk by Sir Francis Drake in 1583, and she is full of gold pieces as big as your hand. Twenty years ago divers came and tried to reach the galleon, but they lost their lives and their diving suits still lie there on the sea bottom, which now has been lifted very near the surface by the earthquake. If you wish I will bring you one of those diving suits and you can go down with me and see the old wreck."

"That will be fine!" cried Wallace, who loved adventures. "I will go home and tell my father and meet you in an hour."

He ran home to tell his father, but when he found that Senor Don Paprika de Tabasco, their landlord, was there, he remained silent about his good fortune. The Spanish landlord had told his crippled father that he must pay his rent or leave the miserable hut at once. Wallace asked Don Tabasco to wait three days and he would be paid.

"Where can you procure forty reals?" asked the fiery Don. "Have you a hidden store?"

"I am trying to find some pearls," replied Wallace, "and if I succeed I will pay you."

### The Landlord Hears It.

"I will wait three days more," said Tabasco, "and then—well, out goes the Eastman family."

He then rode off, but not far away he dismounted and crept back to listen outside of the hut, so that he heard Wallace tell his father about the sunken ship. He resolved to find her and secure the gold at once, and hurried off to get a boat and a diver to go down after the gold.

Meanwhile Wallace returned to the shore and met the Mer-King, who gave him a bag that held a bushel of fine pearls, which he secreted among the rocks at once. Then he put on the diving suit which the King had brought and the merman carried him out to sea a short distance and they sank together to the lost ship's deck. It was a wonderful old ship, with high bows and a stern like a tower. Wallace looked down into the main lee hatchway, and, sure enough, the galleon was filled with big gold "pieces-of-eight." Of course, he could remain below but a few seconds, as he had no air pump to send down fresh air, and so they shot up again and went back to shore just in time to escape being seen by Don Paprika de Tabasco. He came, and for hours sought for the lost galleon, but the merman carried his sounding line always far from the wreck, and he finally went away in disgust.

Wallace next morning went to the shore with his cart and the merman brought the boy gold until the cart was filled. When noon came the boy had taken enough of the broad pieces home to make him wealthy for the rest of his life, and the sudden appearance of the landlord driving away the merman, Wallace ceased operations for that day. Instead of carting gold he thought and thought until he had invented an air box to fasten to the helmet of his diving suit. This was filled with oxygen, which was made by an ingenious chemical combination of peroxide of hydrogen and perhydrol of oxygen, so that he could simply walk into the sea and out to the sunken ship and always be provided with plenty of air. When this was finished the three days allowed by Don Tabasco had expired, and he came for his rent. He was very much surprised and angry, too, when Wallace paid him in gold, which he saw at once must have come from a wrecked Spanish ship, as the dates on the coins were of the fourteenth century. He tried to discover where the wreck lay, but Wallace refused to divulge his se-



WALLACE MEETS THE PRINCESS LURLINE

cret, so Don Tabasco went away very angry, and resolved to watch the boy closely next day.

But next morning Wallace was at the shore before sunrise, and, dressing in his diving suit, he quickly entered the water, walking straight to sea until the

All day long Wallace wandered over the sea bottom, broke over his head and he disappeared a moment before the Spaniard came to watch for him. tom, enjoying the sight of the many wonders of the deep. The air box worked so well that he scarcely realized that he was several fathoms beneath the surface as he explored the secret places in the galleon and examined the remarkable things he discovered everywhere in the ship.

### The Mermaid Helped Him.

Gems and jewels of rare value and beauty were there in vast quantities, gold-inlaid armor and weapons, gold vessels, brilliant and precious stones and statuettes of ivory, silver and ebony that had been taken from the temples of Peru and Mexico 350 years before.

The mermen were busy as bees carrying out the golden stores and taking everything to a spot near shore where Wallace could easily get at the treasure and cart it all away, and the King told him to amuse himself by exploring the sea bottom. This was so pleasant that the next day Wallace brought an electric light so that he could remain under the water in the evening and thus study the mysteries of the sea by night. It was thus that he met the lovely Lurline, the Mer-King's daughter, who, returning from her mermaid's boarding school in the Gulf Stream, arrived by night and hurried to seek her father at the wreck.

### Met the Beautiful Princess.

Wallace was starting out with his electric light to

explore some coral groves when he met the beautiful Mer-Princess, and he stopped, transfixed with amazement and delight, for she was the loveliest creature ever seen on land or sea. Lurline was frightened at the great helmet with its glaring glass eyes, but before she could flee her father came and told her who Wallace was and how he had saved his life.

"You may not know," explained the King to Wallace, "that we mer-people have each of us legs like yours inside of these tails, and we can, if we desire, shake off the tail and walk as you do; but once removed we can never replace the scaly tail. We must therefore walk instead of swimming, and he who has lost his tail is no longer considered a genuine merman; therefore, he must go and live by himself. I could have escaped from that pool among the rocks had I cared to sacrifice this useful as well as ornamental tail."

"No one could have expected you to do that," said Wallace. "You would not have been King any longer, I suppose, had you returned on foot to your people."

"Certainly not," replied the King. "That's why I am so grateful to you, my lad. Then the King left Wallace and Lurline together.

"You have rewarded me beyond my deserts, but I shall ask you for another gift," said the boy, almost a week later, when all of the golden treasure had been removed to shore and hidden in a cave known only to Wallace.

"What more can I do?" asked the King. "Anything that's in my power is yours."

"Lurline and I have fallen in love with each other," said Wallace.

"What! Would you leave your old father?" cried his majesty, looking fixedly at his blushing daughter. "Do you wish to lose your beautiful tail and live on

shore and wear bonnets, with feathers and flowers, dresses, trails, shoes and stockings, and all that sort of rubbish? Fie!"

Lurline admitted that she loved Wallace even more than her lovely tail, and shyly confessed to a yearning for silk dresses, parasols and shirt waists, and in the end the King gave in and granted permission for them to marry.

"Now that you have consented," cried Lurline, "I will tell you that I think it better that I should live on shore, because while I was at boarding school the Prince of the Blue Mermen saw me one day and asked me to marry him. When I refused he declared that he would run away with me, and that is why I came home. He will surely follow me here, but he cannot annoy me on shore."

"If he comes here I will give him such a welcome that he will not stay long!" cried the King, angrily, for he hated the Blue Mermen. "However, you will be safer on land, as you say, and so we will have the wedding tomorrow."

### Tabasco Hunts for Treasure.

Wallace returned home filled with joy, and told his father all that had happened. Don Tabasco had been seen hovering about the hut seeking for Wallace, but they no longer feared the Spaniard, as the gold was safely hidden. Don Tabasco was quite sure that Wallace had not been to the wreck, for, of course, he knew nothing of the air box, and thought there was but one way to do diving, and that is from a boat, and therefore he felt certain that the golden store had not been disturbed at all. He had been sending divers down everywhere, but they never came near the galleon, and Don Tabasco had determined to go down the next day in a diving suit and search for himself, as he thought his divers were dishonest and were trying to

**Wallace's First Meeting With King of Mermen, Who Was Cut off From His Home by an Earthquake.**

secure all the gold for themselves. Therefore he went out in his boat, with one man to pump the air down to him, on the wedding day of Wallace and Lurline, and it happened that he descended not very far from the sunken ship.

He began to walk around on the sandy bottom, peering into the dark depths beyond, but as he had no electric light he could see but a few feet around him. Nothing was visible but giant seaweed waving in the current, or many-colored fish darting in alarm hither and thither as he strode slowly along, but just as he came around the corner of a great coral-covered rock he saw a dreadful shape advancing toward him, and in great fright he tugged sharply at the rope for his man to pull him up quickly.

### Seized by the Blue Mermaid.

It was the Prince of the Blue Mermen coming to seize Lurline, with a host of scaly mermen, all of whom had indigo-blue whiskers that reached to their waists. A spy who had been lingering about the King's submarine palace of pearl since morning had just told him all that he had learned regarding the diver who had come to the sea depths, and who was to wed the Princess that very day, and the Blue Prince was wild with jealous rage. The instant he saw the Spanish landlord in his diving suit he concluded that it was his rival, the bridegroom, and he dashed at Don Tabasco, gnashing his teeth and emitting a million frothy bubbles.

The Spaniard in his unwieldy diving suit, with its leaden-soled footgear, could not move quickly, and his man was slow in responding to his signals, and therefore the Prince seized him before he could move a foot. He tried to scream and fought fiercely with the Blue Prince, but the latter was too strong for him, and he bore him away exulting in the thought that he had prevented the marriage, intending to get the Princess later.

### Downfall of the Blue Prince.

Now, the Prince's spy had not known that the wedding was to be in the morning, and so at that very minute it was all over, and the wedding procession was approaching the spot where the Prince had seized Don Tabasco. The King was swimming in front with the Queen, and Wallace, with his lovely bride, clad in a marine-blue gown made of sea silk, were walking behind them, for she had discarded her mermaid's tail as soon as she became Mrs. Eastman. He carried his electric light, and its rays, falling on the silver scales of the mermen, the colored corals, the brilliant fish and the wondrous submarine flowers, made the scene weirdly beautiful and splendid.

Suddenly the Blue Prince appeared rushing toward the procession, with Don Tabasco still struggling in his strong arms.

He halted when he saw the long line of mermen and merwomen, and then, seeing Wallace with Lurline, he seemed to realize that he had seized the wrong diver. He hesitated only a moment, then, casting Don Tabasco aside, he dashed at Wallace. The boy was quite prepared for him, and as he neared him he turned on the full current of electricity in his lamp and just touched the Blue Prince with the live wire. The shock hurled him to the sea bottom, and Wallace threw himself upon him, pressed the lamp against him and shocked him so that he was paralyzed and helpless. Then they bound him with seaweed.

His companions fled as soon as they saw him fall, and Wallace sent two mermen to the surface with Don Tabasco, who was almost suffocated. But he soon revived, and was put into his boat and taken to shore, and you may be sure he was duly grateful to Wallace for rescuing him, and afterward was always very friendly to both the lad and his lovely mermaid wife.

### And They Lived Happily Ever After.

Of course the war between the two bodies of mermen came to an end as soon as his followers learned of the downfall of their blue leader.

Indeed, he so lost his hold on his own nation that they began to fight among themselves, and it was not long before they were so split up into factions that they had all they could do to ward off their different enemies at home.

Now, if you should happen to visit San Jacopo, in South America, you may see Mrs. Lurline Eastman out driving or walking almost any day, and everybody will tell you that she is the most beautiful woman in the city, but nobody knows that she is the Sea King's daughter. They live close to the shore, and many nights the mermaids and mermen come and sit on their porch in the moonlight for hours. Sometimes even in the daytime I have seen the King sitting there in a rocking chair, smoking a cigar and holding his little baby, who is named after his grandpa, in his arms and looking as if he was thinking whether or not it were better to be a landsman for good and all instead of a merman, and help Wallace spend his immense fortune.

WALT McDOUGALL.

### DAVID B. HILL DRAMATIZED.

Even David B. Hill is to be dramatized. A story that comes out of New York says: Following the example set by Jerome Sykes in making Mark Hanna the foundation of the principal character in "The Billionaire," the librettist employed by Miss Maude Lambert to provide her with a suitable vehicle for a starring tour next season has hit upon the plan of making a character closely resembling former Senator David B. Hill a leading one in the new comic opera.

"The Woman Hater" is the name which in all likelihood will be selected for the piece. The character designated by the title is a United States senator whose chief characteristic is his aversion to the fair sex. He is a bachelor who lives all alone in a big mansion dubbed "Roosters' Roost," and whom the sight of a skirt nearly drives into hysterics. Mr. Hill has often been termed a woman hater, and it is said that the leading character in the new play is to resemble the Democratic leader in several other particulars.

Much of the atmosphere of the comic opera will be political. Many of the scenes are laid in Washington. The senator fights tooth and nail a claim against the government which a shy young thing, played by the prima donna, is attempting to rush through congress. Of course, just as the finale is reached the "woman hater" is smitten by the charms of the prima donna and becomes not only her champion in her claim against the government, but the successful suitor for her hand.

Immediately after "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" closes its season, Miss Lambert will sail for Paris to select her gowns for the new production, and incidentally place her voice in the hands of a specialist who has prepared many other aspirants for stellar honors.



THE MER-KING CAUGHT IN THE POOL AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE